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INTRODUCTION:

Meeting Emerging Global Policy Challenges: Positioning Social Policy Between Development and Growth?

Prepared for the Special Issue: Meeting Emerging Global Policy Challenges: Positioning Social Policy between Development and Growth, Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy

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This special issue combines contributions to a series of collaborative workshops and conference symposia of the UK Social Policy Association, the UK Development Studies Association and the Indian Social Policy Association held at the University of Bath (April 26th-27th 2013), the University of Birmingham (November 16th 2013), O.P. Jindal Global University (March 24th-25th 2014) and the University of Sheffield (July 14th-16th 2014) asking: *What is the Role of Social Policies in Meeting Emerging Global Policy Challenges* and *What Can Social Policy and International Development Studies Learn from Each Other?*

The main starting point for these different activities was the recognition that researchers and practitioners from social policy and international development studies increasingly face similar emerging global policy challenges at conceptual, methodological, technical and practitioner levels. In a world that is rapidly changing, increasingly connected and uncertain, the need and opportunity for fruitful intellectual collaboration between the two academic fields of inquiry is greater than ever. This *Special Issue* intends to take this initiative forward by covering different perspectives and approaches that examine the intellectual distinction between social policy and international development studies and look to develop a shared theoretical framework for global applied policy analysis. More specifically, it aims to explore the role of productivist and protective welfare activities and provide new insights into the particularities of global (informal) welfare regimes and the cross-cultural complexities of policy-making in the post-2008 financial crisis era.

There is a recognised link between social policy and international development and a growing awareness of the need to establish social policy studies at the forefront of growth agendas at national and international levels. Contributions to the development of social policies in action is particularly pressing in middle-income countries such as the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and MINT (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Thailand) where growth has been relatively strong but where social problems such as large-scale material poverty and inequality act as a brake on potential (see e.g. Surrender and Walker, 2013). The necessity to engage with the concerns of social policy internationally, is evidenced further by the existence of trends that affect all countries including: persistent and multidimensional barriers to well-being in richer countries leaving large proportions of their populations, particularly children, highly vulnerable, insecure and socially excluded (UNICEF, 2013; Oxfam, 2014); the reconfiguration of social risks through the increased dualisation and casualisation of labour markets (Standing, 2009; Emmenegger et al., 2012); and the changing relationship between public, corporate and third sector actors in the fields of social policy and international development (Farnsworth, 2012). The contemporary stresses

resulting from these trends are having profound effects upon the global political landscape in terms of prevalent ideas, identities, movements, gender, racial equality and diversity. They constitute a challenge to entrenched elites and privilege expressed increasingly in the form of protest, violence, riots and so on.

As such, collectively the papers in this *Special Issue* speak to a number of pressing debates in the literature, including: comparative welfare/wellbeing regime analysis (see e.g. Gough et al., 2004; DeHaan, 2010) and the related literature on the varieties of social and economic development (see e.g. North, 1990; Midgley, 2014); the study of multi-pillar, corporate and informal welfare (see e.g. Powell and Barrientos, 2004; Wood and Gough, 2006); the discourse on global social citizenship and crisis recovery (see e.g. Yeates, 2010; ILO, 2011); the study of intersections between decommodification, capabilities, rights and empowerment (see e.g. Sen, 2005; Hick, 2012); the analysis of changes in the global economy and the study of mechanisms and impacts of transnational and global processes on social policy and international development (see e.g. Haggard and Kaufmann, 2008; Midgley and Piachaud, 2013). Rather than focusing on the more recent introduction of social legislations and programmes such as conditional cash transfers or cash- or food-for-work programs and their respective impact on poverty, inequality and well-being in middle and low income countries, the papers in this *Special Issue* are deliberately conceptual and methodological in nature.

The first paper by James Copestake examines the synergies between social policy and international development studies by building on a framework devised by Andrew Abbott to understand the evolution of social sciences and academic disciplines (Abbott 2012). Copestake suggests both fields of inquiry are examples of Abbott's 'knowledge lineages', established to deal with the evolving complexity of the social world and goes on to suggest that development studies as a distinctive knowledge lineage consists of three interrelated components: a commitment to a normative vision, a grounded understanding of historical reality, and a willingness to engage with action, intervention or praxis. Copestake suggests that social policy is anchored to a very similar framework, which raises the question of whether the two disciplines might benefit from greater convergence. Copestake offers a middle ground response, which rejects the idea of complete convergence but allows for more comprehensive and collaborative understanding while at the same time, encouraging academic pluralism. Following from this, Naila Kabeer draws on policy documents of major international organisations to trace the changing contestations of 'the social' in international development. Kabeer sees a decline in the hegemonic status of classical economic growth models and neoliberal laissez-faire approaches, as they became increasingly challenged by newly shaping discourses on human capabilities, inequalities and human rights. These different challenges, she argues, culminated in the UN Millenium Development Goals, which however employed a 'narrow interpretation' of capabilities and largely circumvented commitments to human rights. More recently, Kabeer goes on to argue, the consistent evidence on the drivers of global inequalities has led to alternative progressive policy prescriptions at the global and local levels. However she also contends that despite all of this, the specific language of social policy has been slow to permeate into these debates. Kabeer suggests that the notion of 'social development' may present a more fruitful opportunity to overcome persisting cross-disciplinary divisions. Geof Wood's contribution also points to important divisions between international development studies and – particularly – state-centred approaches in comparative social policy research. Given the inability of many state actors to provide security to large parts of its citizenry, Wood argues that the role of supra- and sub-national entities is much more prevalent. Drawing mostly on his research in South Asia, Wood describes an extremely complex landscape of overarching cultural historical factors, fragmented institutional entities and policy preferences by powerful elites and other agenda setters, which combine to effect multidimensional well-being outcomes. He goes on to argue that globalisation enhances some of these complexities by further undermining the state and deepening the reliance on clientelism and philanthropy – the main characteristic of informal welfare in imperfect wellbeing regimes.

The final three papers present empirical applications that address more specific methodological or conceptual issues. Stefan Kühner employs fuzzy set analysis of twenty-nine countries covered in recent data by the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2013) and concludes that the exact combination of commitments to productive and productive welfare across Asia and the Pacific is neither driven by geographic location nor economic affluence. Data patterns also suggest the absence of income protection is connected to poor human development, and high education investment is unlikely to yield any reductions in income inequality unless it is coupled with other types of productive and protective welfare programmes. By identifying specific cases that deviate from these general data patterns, however, Kühner adds to existing conceptual approaches to typologise welfare policy and invites further investigation of the more specific linkages between policy inputs and outcomes in middle and low-income context. The focus of Lata Narayanaswamy's paper is on the role of civil society actors in fostering knowledge and information flows that will not only generate greater economic growth but also help poor and marginalised groups achieve improved social welfare outcomes. These premises lie at the heart of a powerful narrative around inclusive 'knowledge societies', which currently enjoys favour among international agencies, donors, NGOs and practitioners. Narayanaswamy problematizes the idea that knowledge is a discrete and tradable entity that can be simply transferred to those in need, and reminds us instead of the significance of systemic and structural inequalities in determining knowledge flows as well as poor welfare outcomes. She also examines in more detail the facilitative role given to civil society in the knowledge society framework. She identifies a number of significant tensions for NGOs including their increasing role as service providers, the dynamics of being accountable to donors and governments, and their contribution to the deepening and expansion of free market capitalism. In constructing her two critiques, Narayanaswamy exposes a critical question about whether knowledge transfer and civil society facilitation can truly transform social welfare outcomes and promote social accountability or whether they simply serve to promote the proliferation of global capital. Finally, Katherine Running provides a case study on poor employment protection policies and low human development in India. Running highlights that the National Manufacturing Policy (2011) which potentially could have added more depth to the poorly defined and implemented labour laws in India has failed to live up to its expectations. Instead, she shows that due to the failure of corporate lobbies to influence labour market policies, worker's rights in India remain precarious and are not institutionalised into wider development debates on social rights. Most importantly, Running makes a substantial contribution towards understanding social policy in India, wherein the role of employers especially in the informal economy is ambiguous and much of the Indian policy discussions focus on cash-for-work programmes with little consideration for qualitative improvements in workers' employment conditions.

To conclude, then, recent years have seen an important evolution within both social policy and international development studies and their evolving intellectual boundaries have enabled a closer mutual relationship. Indeed, it may seem difficult to clearly demarcate the two fields of inquiry as many academics, researchers and professionals address similar issues in very similar ways. There is, however, also reason to believe that important differences persist. This *Special Issue* and the series of collaborative workshops and conferences of the UK Social Policy Association, UK Development Studies Association and the Indian Social Policy Association it is based on, accommodated a more purposeful dialogue between representatives of both disciplines. However the *Special Issue* also wants to be a marker for future joint endeavours which raise more particular questions about respective knowledge lineages and predominate research methodologies; investigate the potential for co-producing or co-developing meaningful concepts such as gender and power; and goes beyond a single region focus of analysis in order to more fully respond to the growing interest in global social development and applied policy analysis as part of the post-2015 MDG agenda.

Notes on Editors

Joe Devine is currently Head of Department of Social and Policy Sciences at the University of Bath. He is also a Senior Lecturer in International Development and a member of the UK Development Studies Association Council. The focus of his research is on the politics of development policy, especially in relation to extreme poverty and wellbeing dynamics. He has carried out extensive fieldwork in South Asia on governance and patronage, state capacity, the role of NGOs and civil society, and the relation between religion and development. He is the Associate Editor of the *Journal of South Asian Development*.

Stefan Kühner is Senior Lecturer in Social Policy at the University of York and International Relations Officer of the UK Social Policy Association. His main academic interest centres on comparative and international social policy with emphasis on the politics of welfare state change. His research has explored the effect of government ideology on welfare reforms in historical perspective and discussed the notion of welfare productivism as backdrop for comparing social policies across high, middle and low-income economies. He is co-author of *The Short Guide to Social Policy* (2nd Edition, 2015, Bristol: Policy Press).

Keerty Nakray is an Associate Professor at Jindal Global Law School, NCR New Delhi and a Visiting Fellow at the Feinstein International Centre, Tufts University (US). Her recent publications include two edited books *Gender Based Violence and Public Health: International Perspectives on Budgets and Policies* (2012, Routledge: London) and *Social Science Research Ethics for a Globalizing World: Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (2014, Routledge: New York). She is Book Reviews Editor of the *Journal of South Asian Development* and serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Gender Studies*.

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